

GROUP ACTION

THE NEWSLETTER OF GROUP FOR THE EAST END

Leading the Way: Taking back our bays and harbors

- Advanced Septic Systems Now Required in East Hampton Town And Parts of Southampton Town
- Substantial Local Rebates Available For Qualified Homeowners Who Replace Septic Systems
- Innovative Wetlands Water Treatment System Installed at Shelter Island's Sylvester Manor
- \$2.5 Billion Allocated for Water Quality Infrastructure by New York State
- Grant Applications for Septic System Replacements Accepted by Suffolk County



"Hmmm... water looks ok to me..."



Looks can be deceiving: East End water crisis

Here's what happened, why, and what the Group is doing to save our bays, harbors, lakes and ponds.

The problem:

Excess nitrogen is choking our local waters

The amount of excess nitrogen in local waters has increased so dramatically over the last 25 years that our marine ecosystems are on the brink of total collapse. If left unchecked, the environmental, public health, and economic costs would be disastrous.

Biggest culprit:

Old, leaky septic systems

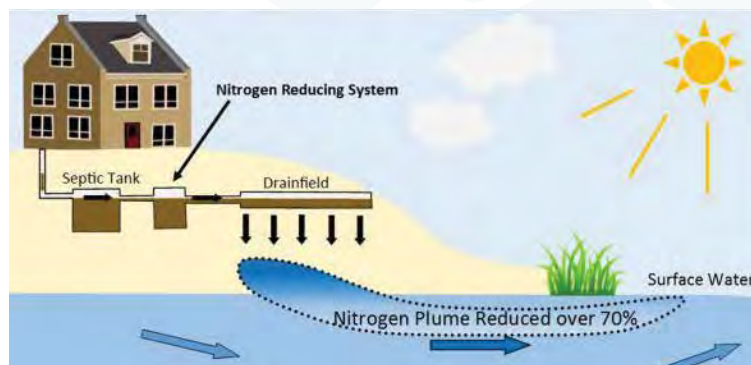
Scientists have identified old, leaky septic systems as one of the worst offenders in polluting East End waters. The excess nitrogen seeps directly into our bays and ponds, where its effects can lead to the death of massive numbers of marine plants and animals and make it unsafe for people (and pets) to swim, eat shellfish and go boating.

The solution:

Replace old septic systems

Working with clean water partners, scientists, elected representatives, engineers and civic organizations, the answer became clear:

1. The old systems must be upgraded or replaced by high-tech ones that substantially reduce nitrogen.
2. They must be affordable for residents and businesses.
3. The public must be educated on the importance of replacing old systems.



Illustrations courtesy of East Hampton Department of Natural Resources



"Water quality is the problem of our time...and what we will be judged on by future generations. We're at the stage now where the time of analysis and study must be complemented by action."

— Steve Bellone, Suffolk County Executive

County Executive Steve Bellone with Suffolk County Legislator Bridget Fleming

To You, Our Supporters:

For years, the Group has been dedicated to stopping the rapid decline of water quality on the East End, and we welcomed County Executive Bellone's call to action.

Today, through your generosity, our efforts to advocate and educate are working better than ever. Low-nitrogen septic systems—with funding options—have become a reality. Our work is far from over, but you give us hope and allow the Group to keep the fight to protect the beautiful East End.

Thank you.



This staff photo was taken over the winter, but it conveys exactly how we feel now!



Water Quality Accomplishments:

East Hampton Town and the Group team up to attack nitrogen pollution

First town in Suffolk County to require low-nitrogen septic systems

Fed up with beach closings and reports of worsening water quality, the Town of East Hampton became the first in Suffolk County to require low-nitrogen septic systems in all newly constructed buildings – residential and commercial – effective January 1, 2018. These high-tech systems prevent approximately 70% of nitrogen pollution from flowing into our groundwater and polluting our bays and harbors. The Group was pleased to work with Town leaders on the development of these new clean water requirements.

First on East End to offer Septic Rebate Program

Earlier this summer, the Group campaigned in support of an innovative, local funding program to help homeowners finance the replacement of old and failing septic systems with low-nitrogen systems. The program, adopted by East Hampton Town in August, is expected to generate over \$150 million over the next 30 years. Rebates up to \$16,000 are available for qualified homeowners.

➔ Learn more: bit.ly/easthamptonrebateprogram



Thanks to a grant from the Long Island Community Foundation, the Group was able to partner with Sylvester Manor in providing public, media and educational outreach for the project.

The Group's vice president Aaron Virgin (first on left) at Sylvester Manor with clean water partners and elected officials.

The Group partners with Sylvester Manor on Shelter Island

First constructed wetland system in Suffolk County

Sylvester Manor Educational Farm installed a constructed wetland system, which uses natural processes that occur in plants and microorganisms to treat wastewater from the farm's visitor bathrooms and staff kitchen. The groundbreaking system is part of Suffolk County's Reclaim Our Water campaign, and will be monitored by the County and Stony Brook University's NYS Center for Clean Water Technology.

The Group works with Suffolk County to promote septic replacement grants

Program receives over 500 applications in first two months

The Group joined forces with Suffolk County to advance the goals of its Reclaim Our Water campaign, which has become a centerpiece of County Executive Steve Bellone's administration. The recently launched county-wide program is for homeowners who wish to replace their aging and failing septic systems with low nitrogen systems.

We are happy to report that grants up to \$11,000 are already being approved for qualified homeowners!

➔ To learn more and see if you qualify for a Suffolk County grant to replace your septic system, go to: reclaimourwater.info

The Group advocates for new septic systems and funding in Southampton Town

Low-nitrogen requirements adopted

The Southampton Town Board passed a new building code amendment that will require the use of low-nitrogen septic systems for all new construction in areas most susceptible to water pollution – effective September 1, 2017.

Septic rebate program launched

Like the Town of East Hampton, Southampton Town moved quickly since the approval of the expanded Community

Preservation Fund to develop a new septic replacement rebate program. The Group campaigned in support of the program, which provides rebates up to \$15,000 for qualified homeowners to replace old and failing septic systems with low-nitrogen systems. The program is expected to generate approximately \$300 million over the next 30 years.

➔ Learn more: bit.ly/easthamptonrebateprogram





Community Preservation Fund expanded and extended

The Group pushes long-term funding to improve water quality

Last November, the Group advocated strongly for changes to the East End's highly successful Community Preservation Fund (CPF), which would allow up to 20% of its annual revenue to be dedicated to water quality improvement projects. East End voters overwhelmingly approved the CPF ballot proposition, which is expected to raise \$700 million over the next 30 years for these initiatives across eastern Long Island.

Learn More: Bob DeLuca: 631.765.6450 ext. 213 or bdeluca@eastendenvironment.org

\$185 million allocated for septic systems and land protection in New York State



Thanks to the unified and bipartisan commitment of Governor Cuomo and Long Island's State Representatives, the public call for clean water action was heard and acted upon in this year's State budget. As part of this unprecedented

agreement, New York State has committed \$2.5 billion for clean water infrastructure across the State including critically needed wastewater and land protection projects for Long Island.

We applaud the leadership of Long Island Assemblyman Steve Englebright and Senator Kemp Hannon for their exemplary commitment to water quality and navigating this historic agreement through the budget process.

This shows the Group's efforts are paying off and that our State leaders are listening to the public, making clean water a priority across the State.



Thank you to the Rauch Foundation for generously supporting water quality improvement efforts on Long Island, including the establishment of the Long Island Clean Water Partnership, a unique collaborative model comprised of the leading conservation organizations across the region.

Learn more: longislandcleanwaterpartnership.org

DONATE ONLINE
GroupfortheEastEnd.org



4,000 pounds of meds kept out of local waters

Pill by pill, ton by ton, dollar by dollar, your support counts

Since the Group launched the East End Medication Disposal Program in 2013, drop boxes at participating police stations across the region continue to fill up—FAST. We started the program with Suffolk County when we learned that the presence of pharmaceuticals in our drinking water was identified as an emerging threat to water quality.

Thank you for not flushing!

Learn More: GroupfortheEastEnd.org/meds

Traffic crisis averted! Application for Tuckahoe shopping complex withdrawn

Developer reconsiders, facing opposition from the Group and civic leaders



If you've traveled the South Fork, there's a good chance you've been stuck in the terrible traffic that has come to characterize County Road 39. The proposed Tuckahoe Center, an expansive commercial shopping center, would have made that traffic, your quality of life, and the safety of every individual travelling this overburdened stretch of road substantially worse.

For nearly a decade, the developer sought to re-zone nine acres in the Tuckahoe hamlet of Southampton Town (which was supposed to be a low commercial traffic area), and build the largest shopping center on the South Fork in a generation.

Thanks to your support—and after many public hearings—the Group, together with our dedicated community partners, was successful in getting the developer to withdraw the application. As a result, County Road 39 and our back roads are not littered with more cars and safety hazards than they already have.

This application demonstrates the insatiable appetite for development and urbanization of our fragile East End, and the constant vigilance that is needed to protect it.

GROUP AT A GLANCE: The Numbers

Whether it's monitoring shorebirds, planting beach grass or educating kids about nature, we're making great strides in protecting the East End environment! Here are some of our recent successes...



12 pairs of piping plovers nested on North Fork beaches this spring and summer. Through a partnership with the Town of Southold, the Group monitors the beaches where these federally protected shorebirds live and breed.



62 free programs were offered by the Group at Southold Town's Downs Farm Preserve during the 2016-2017 school year.



190 least tern chicks fledged from those same North Fork beaches. That's triple the amount from last year!

189 volunteers planted beach grass and native plants at Sagg Main Beach, Greenport School, and Remsenburg School thanks to a grant from the Long Island Community Foundation



"Now more than any other time in history, it has become essential to provide our young people with hands-on learning opportunities to experience the world around them. The Greenport School Garden is a wonderful example of how local organizations such as Group for the East End can work in partnership with local communities and encourage young people to become stewards of their own environment. We must continue working together to help them love the environment before we can ask them to help save it."

— Brady Wilkins, Greenport School Teacher, Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Math (STEAM)



3,647 children were educated by the Group in the 2016-2017 school year. Our stellar education team taught lessons in classrooms, after-school programs, and on field trips—part of the Group's long-term commitment to inspire children to appreciate nature and become our future environmental leaders.

Volunteer-Intern Spotlight

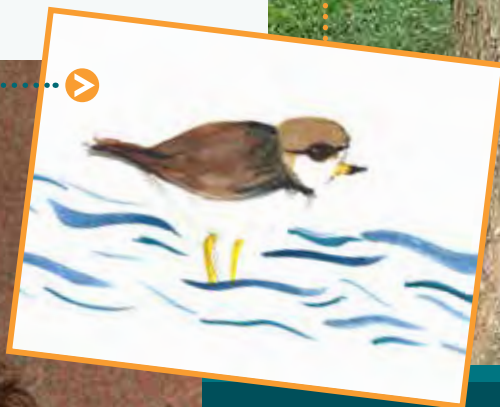


Meet Pamela Heidtmann, volunteer, artist, environmentalist, grandma and all-around lovely person.

Pam enthusiastically helped the Group clean up several beaches this year. She sorted through countless pounds of marine debris and created colorful wildlife sculptures, which were featured at our Earth Day Festival and Swing Into Summer benefit. The sculptures raise awareness about marine pollution and how it is killing wildlife in and above our local waters. **Thank you, Pam, for your boundless energy! Special thanks to the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation for generously funding the Long Island Sound beach cleanups and art projects.**



Stephanie Licciardi, Summer Intern and Unabashed Tree Hugger



The Group was fortunate this summer to have interns **Stephanie Licciardi** and **Hannah Weinstein**.

These capable, hardworking young women were an asset to our organization, and we wish them well as they continue their studies - Stephanie at George Washington University and Hannah at Cornell University.

Hannah, we loved your piping plover artwork!

Want to be a volunteer?



Want to help the Group? Join us! You can volunteer in the field, from home, or in our office.

Contact Aaron Virgin at 631-765-6450, ext. 218, or acvirgin@eastendenvironment.org.



Kerry Heffernan, Roman Roth, Joey Wölffer, Robert M. Rubin, Graciela Dauhajre, Katherine Leahy Birch (Chairman), and Bob DeLuca (President)

Photos by Christopher London

Swing Into Summer Benefit

None of our environmental achievements would be possible without the generous support of dedicated friends and members who come together each year at our summer benefit to raise nearly 50% of our annual budget. This year's event, which took place June 17 at The Bridge, was a big success! Thank you to co-chairs Katherine & Marco Birch, Graciela & Munir Dauhajre, and Genevieve & Rob Lynch, and to everyone who supported the benefit. Special thanks to our extraordinary hosts Stéphane Samuel and Robert M. Rubin. **Save the date - June 16, 2018 - for next year's party!**



Raj and Christina Sethi



Anything for the environment! Marina DeLuca used all props available to help the auctioneer sell a margarita - pig roast party for 50 people, generously donated by Ray Congdon. Thank you Ray and Marina!

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Katherine Leahy Birch

VICE CHAIRMEN

Robbianne Mackin
William Ryall

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This newsletter was printed on Rolland Enviro™ 100 Print.

- Contains FSC certified 100% post-consumer fiber
- Certified EcoLogo, Processed Chlorine Free & FSC Recycled
- Manufactured using biogas energy



Group for the East End

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Make a lasting impact on the East End environment

Remember the Group in your financial planning

• **Charitable Contribution from an IRA**

If you're at least 70½, you can take a distribution from your Individual Retirement Account (IRA), make a donation to Group for the East End and exclude it from your income of up to \$100,000 per person.

• **Gift of Securities**

You can reduce or even eliminate capital gains tax. Any publicly traded stock that has increased in value that you have owned for more than a year can provide greater tax benefits than giving cash.

• **Bequest**

Please consider naming Group for the East End as a beneficiary in your estate plans. Whether through your will, a trust or insurance policy, you can plan for the future, pass on your values, and make a lasting impact on the East End's environment.

For more information:

Aaron Virgin, Vice President 631-765-6450 x218 or acvirgin@eastendenvironment.org

All calls and emails are confidential. Group for the East End does not offer financial or tax advice.



Our Mission: Group for the East End protects and restores the environment of eastern Long Island through education and professional advocacy, and by inspiring people to embrace a conservation ethic and take action. The Group is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization.

Learn more about our work at GroupfortheEastEnd.org

